

# Ken's Korner Newsletter



Committed to HIV/AIDS Advocacy

March 2005



## Agency Announcements

**Community Health Awareness Group (C-HAG):** A volunteer program has started and the first training will be held on March 19, 2005 from 9am to 12pm. For more information please contact David Garcia at (313) 963-3434.

**Job opportunity:** Southeastern Michigan Health Association is seeking to hire a Detroit-based, HIV Program Consultant to verify health insurance eligibility, assure payment, and conduct quality assurance. 35 hrs/week, plus benefits. Experience in HIV field preferred. No phone calls please. Send resume and cover letter by April 8, 2005 to John Bain, Southeastern Michigan Health Association, 200 Fisher Bldg. Detroit, MI 48202-3011

**Wayne County Pluscare Management (Pluscare or PCMS):** Effective March 1, 2005 this program is now Wayne County Med Basic. Also, patient hospitalization under this program is no longer covered.

**Michigan Department of Community Health:** The Division of HIV/AIDS and STD is now known as the Division of Health, Wellness and Disease Control.

**Family Independence Agency:** Effective March 15, 2005 the Family Independence Agency will be known as the Department of Human Services.

**AIDS Partnership Michigan (APM):** "Knowledge is Power" bracelets can now be purchased for a suggested donation of \$2.00 each. All proceeds will benefit the programs of APM. Please visit [www.aidspartnership.org](http://www.aidspartnership.org) for ordering information.

### ***Do you have announcements?***

E-mail them to Desiree Sanders ([sandersd2@michigan.gov](mailto:sandersd2@michigan.gov)) or Kenneth Pape ([papek@michigan.gov](mailto:papek@michigan.gov)) by the first Monday of the month.

### **Contact**

Desiree Sanders  
FIA: HIV/AIDS Advocacy Services Intern  
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### *Older Populations and HIV/AIDS*

Although HIV/AIDS poses many of the same risks to the older as it does to younger populations, older people are frequently neglected in prevention and care efforts. This neglect is particularly alarming considering trends that show rates of infection and AIDS diagnosis increasing among groups of people over 50 years old. The CDC reports that the number of people older than 50 who are diagnosed with AIDS is increasing every year, and women are carrying a disproportionate burden of increasing rates of AIDS diagnoses. Additionally, UNAIDS has reported that the number of new HIV cases in women over 50 in the US increased 40% over just a five year period.

The longer survival time of many people living with HIV/AIDS partially accounts for the rising number of AIDS diagnoses among older people, however there are other factors that play significant roles as well. Among the most prominent of these factors is the frequent misconception of many health care providers that older people don't engage in risky behaviors or have HIV/AIDS. Primary care physicians may also feel reluctant to engage older patients in dialogues about sex, drug use, and safe behaviors. Jane Fowler of HIV Wisdom for Older Women put it this way: "There is a denial that older people...enjoy sex or that some are injection drug users. This is just ridiculous." Furthermore, older people themselves may be unaware of the risks of HIV/AIDS and have limited knowledge about safe behavior practices. They are also likely to internalize others' embarrassment about their private lives, thus they may shy away from talking about subjects like sex, drugs, and HIV/AIDS with health care providers or family. All of this is compounded by the failure of prevention efforts to target older people (as one source put it: "when was the last time you saw a wrinkled face on a safe sex or HIV ed. poster?").

Additionally, as people get older, health concerns change. For example, health of older people may deteriorate at a faster rate, thus making care-management more difficult and decreasing the time of onset to AIDS. Also, post-menopausal women are doubly at risk as condom use may diminish, and normal aging results in decreases in vaginal lubrication and thinning of vaginal walls, thus increasing the likelihood of infection. Since many symptoms of HIV/AIDS may be similar to other conditions of aging and health providers are already prone to not consider the possibility of HIV/AIDS in their older patients, there is diminished testing for HIV and late diagnoses of AIDS. All of these factors magnify the severity HIV/AIDS' effects upon older people.

Not only do older people face additional health care concerns, but they may also be challenged by particular psychological and social concerns. These are concerns that older people may already be facing, in forms such as depression, feelings of isolation, and barriers of ageism, and having to deal with a disease that carries much of its own fear, stigma, and uncertainty, is likely to make these concerns much more acute.

As more people continue to live longer with HIV/AIDS and older people face more risks associated with HIV/AIDS, it becomes more imperative that we acknowledge these risks and better address the disparities in prevention and care.

**Visit these sources for more info:**

**[www.hivwisdom.org](http://www.hivwisdom.org),**

**[www.eldercare.gov](http://www.eldercare.gov)**

**[www.daaa1a.org/DAAA](http://www.daaa1a.org/DAAA)**



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### *Dental Care Resources*

Medicaid covers complete dental care only for those under 21 and emergency tooth extraction for those over 21, so, here are a couple places that people with low or no income can go to get dental services.

#### **University of Detroit Mercy Dental School**

Laura Wright (313) 745-4595

Services: Complete dental care, except for bridges, provided for those with low or no income. Sensitive to the needs of clients with HIV/AIDS. Clients call Laura to schedule appointment for a screening. At the screening the client and practitioner develop a treatment plan that addresses the needs of the client. Treatment plan requires clients to come in on a regular basis to maintain good health status. Female clients are encouraged to apply.

#### **Thea Bowman Community Health Center**

(313) 255-3333

Services: Complete dental, except for crown, provided for those with low or no income. Pay scale is dependent upon income, ranging from \$20-\$50. Clients can call direct to make an appointment.

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### *Free Tax Preparation Assistance*

As the April 15, 2005 deadline for filing city, state and federal tax forms approaches, you may have clients who are concerned about paying fees to have their taxes prepared. Free tax preparation is available to low-income individuals and families through **Volunteer Accounting Service Team of Michigan (VAST MI)**. From now until April 9 individuals earning less than \$20,000 and couples earning less than \$38,00 can take advantage of this service at various locations throughout Southeastern Michigan.

For more information please contact **VAST MI** at **(313) 647-9620**.





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# Simon House

A community resource for 15 years

Simon House has been providing essential housing services to women living with HIV/AIDS since 1990. Program Director, Janet Threatt and her staff are firmly committed to the services and programs provided by Simon House. Simon House is open 365 days a year and 24 hours a day, which makes intake convenient for all clients. Residents of Simon House receive personalized assistance from an advocate provided by Simon House and a case manager from a case management organization, such as Visiting Nurse Association, AIDS Partnership Michigan and many others. In addition, group therapy is available once a week to residents. Also, support groups are held regularly, which welcomes participation from all women with HIV. Simon House strives to meet the needs of clients through healthy eating and cooking demonstrations, legal referrals, clothing for women and children, bus tickets and cab fare.

Simon House is well known for its shelter services, but it also operates a transitional housing facility. This facility has 11 units consisting of 9 two-bedroom units and 2 one-bedroom units. Women living in the transitional housing units pay rent equivalent to 30% of their income. Other great components of Simon House include the HIV Warriors and Adopt-A-Room. HIV Warriors consists of Janet Threatt, Program Director, and 2 clients providing education to the community. The HIV Warriors graciously make themselves available for speaking engagements. Most recently, the HIV Warriors spoke at the First Institute Church and Oak Grove Church, both in Detroit. Through their speaking engagements, the HIV Warriors educate the community and open the minds of their audience to HIV prevention, awareness and empowerment. The Adopt-A-Room program allows various organizations to give back to Simon House. Through this program an organization can decorate a room, which creates a welcoming atmosphere for not only clients, but also staff.

For more information please call (313) 531-3400. If your client needs shelter assistance please call (313) 531-5118 or (313) 531-3400.

